

**HON. JAMES S. MARPE  
FIRST SELECTMAN  
TOWN OF WESTPORT  
HOUSING COMMITTEE TESTIMONY  
FEBRUARY 5, 2015**

- SB00403      AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF SENIOR HOUSING AS AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- SB00407      AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING APPEALS PROCEDURE
- HB05802      AN ACT CONCERNING THE RESPONSIBLE GROWTH OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- HB06128      AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING LAND USE APPEALS ACT
- HB06145      AN ACT EXEMPTING CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES FROM THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING LAND USE APPEALS ACT

Good evening Chairman Butler, Chairman Winfield, Ranking Members Kupchick and Hwang, and members of the Housing Committee.

My name is Jim Marpe. I am the First Selectman of the Town of Westport. Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening.

Westport is in favor of the State's goal of providing affordable housing. Our Town has a long history of supporting the development of such housing. I am fully supportive of the legislation introduced by Senator Hwang and Representatives Kupchick, Lavielle and Steinberg that creates incentives to allow communities such as Westport to continue efforts in this area and allows progress at a reasonable rate in order to achieve compliance with Section 8-30g.

I would like to make three specific points and provide backup to these points from Westport's perspective.

First, allow relief from some of the 8-30g provisions while providing credit towards moratorium points if a long-term plan, with demonstrated progress against that plan, assures orderly housing development commensurate with the capacity of resources. Westport has demonstrated its commitment to increase affordable housing. Within the past 5 years, we have completely rebuilt one Housing Authority project and another is in development. Our Planning & Zoning Commission has adopted at least 10 zoning regulations to provide diversity in housing. For example, the Commission recently adopted a regulation to promote multi-family housing with the requirement that 20 percent of the total number of units be affordable. The Commission also created an inclusionary overlay district to achieve that goal. Legislation that supports this type of

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demonstrated effort will be very effective towards insuring responsible affordable housing development.

Second, I support the award of one housing unit- equivalent point for affordable senior housing. Nearly 25% of Westport's population is considered "senior." Our seniors have expressed their desire to "age in place" and remain in the community. We are pursuing strategies that will allow this to happen. If affordable senior housing is awarded a full point towards the 10 percent affordable housing threshold, this would provide an even greater incentive to pursue this goal.

Third, housing units constructed prior to 1990 should be counted towards qualification for the temporary moratorium. Like many communities in Connecticut, Westport has always recognized the need for affordable housing. For example, there are 3 affordable housing communities in Westport constructed prior to 1990, but approximately 120 well-maintained, highly desirable housing units in these communities are not eligible for moratorium points. I believe many communities would benefit from the inclusion of these units toward the moratorium.

In conclusion, Westport wants to continue to support the efforts and spirit of 8-30g. We would like the opportunity to do so in a manner that is consistent with our community's Plan of Conservation and Development which has an explicit goal of expanding the variety of housing choices in order to meet the needs of existing and future residents. I encourage this Committee to support the modification of the relevant statutes to provide additional incentives for Westport to fulfill this goal.

Thank you.